

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 3 and 14 are independent. By this Amendment, Claim 1 is amended. Support for the amendment to Claim 1 can be found, for example, in paragraphs [0071]-[0074] of the published specification. No new matter is added.

Applicant appreciates Examiner Rahmjoo's indication that Claims 3-9 and 14 are allowed. Applicant submits that the remaining claims are allowable for at least the reasons discussed below.

The Office Action rejects Claims 1 and 10-13 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over Suzuki, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0081031 A1. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 recites an image processing apparatus including, *inter alia*, an isolated dot discriminating portion judging, for each pixel of a plurality of pixels included in an image, whether the pixel is a center pixel of an isolated dot; and a size detector detecting a size of an isolated dot whose center pixel is a pixel judged by the isolated dot discriminating portion as being a center pixel.

The Office Action asserts that Suzuki's isolation point counting section 76 (see Fig. 14 of Suzuki) corresponds to the claimed isolated dot discriminating portion, and that Suzuki's internal edge counting section 79 (see Fig. 14) corresponds to the claimed size detector. Suzuki discloses that the isolation point counting section 76 counts the number of isolation points ("isolated dots") that exist in a 11x11 pixel matrix region based on halftone dot discrimination isolation point signals "WAMI" and

"KAMI" output from an OR circuit 75, as discussed in paragraphs [0095] and [0096] and shown in Figs. 4 and 14 of Suzuki. On the other hand, the internal edge counting section 79 counts the number of internal edge pixels that exists in a 3x3 pixel matrix region based on a halftone dot internal character region detection edge signal "_EDGL" and a halftone dot internal character region detection internal edge signal "_INEDG" inputted from an AND circuit 78 (see Figs. 4 and 14 and paragraphs [0095] and [0097] of Suzuki). That is, the internal edge counting section 79 ("size detector") counts the number of internal edge pixels that exist in a 3x3 matrix of an internal edge region based on signals from the *AND circuit 78*, not the OR circuit 75 associated with the isolation point counting section 76 (see Fig. 14 of Suzuki). Thus, the internal edge counting section 79 ("size detector") does not count the number of internal edge pixels based on the information included in the internal edge counting section 79 ("isolated dot discriminating portion"). Accordingly, the internal edge counting section 79 ("size detector") does not detect a size of any isolated dot whose center pixel is a pixel judged by the internal edge counting section 79 ("isolated dot discriminating portion") as being a center pixel.

Therefore, Suzuki fails to disclose the combination of features recited in independent Claim 1, including an isolated dot discriminating portion judging, for each pixel of a plurality of pixels included in an image, whether the pixel is a center pixel of an isolated dot; and a size detector detecting a size of an isolated dot whose center pixel is a pixel judged by the isolated dot discriminating portion as being a center pixel. Thus, independent Claim 1 is patentable over Suzuki for at least these reasons.

Claims 10-13 are patentable over Suzuki, at least by virtue of their dependence from patentable independent Claim 1. Thus, a detailed discussion of the additional distinguishing features recited in these dependent claims is not set forth at this time. Therefore, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Suzuki in view of Sawada, U.S. Patent No. 6,181,437. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Sawada fails to overcome the deficiencies of Suzuki. Thus, Claim 2 is patentable over Suzuki and Sawada at least by virtue of its dependence from patentable independent Claim 1. Therefore, a detailed discussion of the additional distinguishing features recited in this dependent claim is not set forth at this time. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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